

November 1, 2015

Instructional Quality Commission
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division (CFIRD)
State Board of Education
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Room 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commission and Board members:

The Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley has a history of working for fair, accurate and culturally sensitive portrayal of diverse religions in school curriculum. We are writing today because we understand the similar concerns of the Hindu community, and the efforts of the Hindu American Foundation. We also believe that the frameworks process should be a transparent one and incorporate feedback.

The Community Relations Council believes that it is important for the frameworks writers to consider what faith groups say about themselves, along with the understanding provided by well-respected experts on religion and society, such as Karen Armstrong and others, and also not shy away from sharing multiple theories and evolving understanding.

In recent years, as our demographics have evolved, many immigrant and minority religious groups in California have raised their voices and called for more objective and broad-minded education on religion and culture in our schools. Jewish students-- indeed students belonging to all non-Christian religious groups-- have benefitted from more inclusive and accurate materials on our people and faith. Along with a reduction in bullying in schools, all students benefit from a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the fundamental contribution of diverse faiths to human existence.

Sincerely,



Diane Fisher
Director, Community Relations Council
Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley



Robert Chaykin
Co-Chair, Community Relations Council
Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley



Marci Gerston
Co-Chair, Community Relations Council
Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley